Chapter 3
EMBER.A INDIGENOUS TOURISM AND THE WORLD OF EXPECTATIONS
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introduction

Parara Puru, an Embera community in the Chagres National Park in Panama, is a site where tourists from economically powerful narions have an opportunity co experience aspects of an Amerindian culture. The tourists meet rhe Ember.\ inhabitants of the community in the context of half-day organized trips, during which the residents of Parara Puru offer a standard 'cultural package' that includes a music-and-dance presencacion, a traditional meal, and a display of handmade Ember:i arcefaccs. This cultural package is adaptable, and the Ember:i hosts are prepared to provide extras to meet additional expectations at the request of their visitors: a tour in the rainfores t, some guidance on Embed medicinal knowledge or informal instruction on other aspeccs of indigenous lifesryle. In chis respect, the varied and particular types of tourist encounter provide opportunities for the Embera co investigate che expectations of their guesrs and, in an effort co satisfy chose expectations, explore additional dimensions of rheir culrure and enhance irs represenranon.
In chis chapter I am concerned with how the residents of Parara Puru investigate and anticipate the expectations of their tourists. I pay parricular attention to questions asked by the tourists during the tou.rists' encounter - for example, those that indicate 'a quest for the authentic Indian' (Ramos 1998: 84) or an ambivalence about the position of indigenous people in the interface of tradition with modernity - and the attempts of the Ember:i hosts to understand

and diplomatically answer rhose quesrions or meet the expectati.ons inherent in chem. I argue chat the questions of che tourists, and the responses of the Ember.I., can help us co explore the meeting ground of two interrelated processes: the development of indigenous cultural representation through tourism, and the growing Ember.I. awarenes. of the expectations of the outside world. The latter, the Embed. increasingly realize, have significantly changed, from stereotyping in the past, co idealized admiration in the present.
In all respects, the courisc expectations, as they are offered co the Embera., are diverse and often contradictory. Some tourists cake co the cultural distinctiveness of the Embera and implicitly encourage a strong adherence co tradition at the exclusion of modernity, an attirnde cl1at reflects a .nostalgia for the idealized 'vanishing savage' and lost worlds unaffected by (Western) civilizing processes (Clifford 1986; Rosaldo 1989; see also Conklin and Graham 1995; Gow 2007). Ochers are prepared to see the Ember.I. as inhabitancs of che modern globalized world, people who maintain their identity, but share the benefits, predicaments and technologies of the modern era. Finally, a few non-indigenous Panamanian visitors are happy co realize char the Embera share common casces and experiences as citizens of che same nation, and are nor so different co them after all. Contradictory expectations such as these encourage che Embera to slightly underplay or acccncuacc their cultural difference in their attempts co guide their visitors co varied, well-known, or sometimes unexplored dimensions of their culture. Overall, the engagement of the Embera with tourism, and their attempts co understand and anticipate the tourist expectations, has inspired a process of self- reevaluacio.n of Embera culture, providing new opporcu.niries for the Embera co improvise and experiment with their cultural representation. ln this process, the question of what is authentic has become a topic of concern among che residencs of Parara Puru, and the tourist encounter an opportunity to rediscover, reAect upon and reconstitute their indigenous t.radicions (Abram, Waldren and Macleod 1997). As has been arcested by an impressive number of anthropological contributions (see among many, Bruner 2005; Coleman and Crang 2002; Abram, Waldren and Macleod 1997; Selwyn 1996; Boissevain 1996), local conceptualizations of authenticity arc undoubtedly shaped through rhe interaction of expectations in the tourist encounter. In fact, some indigenous communities manifest a remarkable adaptability in caking advancage of the desire of Western audiences to consume authentic 'native' culcure. They often recombine and reinterpret old elements of their tradition, or introduce new elements, co produce innovative cultural adaptations or enhance their represemacion. This has evidently been the case with several Panamanian ethnic groups (cf Pereiro Perez 2010; Howe 2009; Velasquez Runk 2009; Guerr6n-Montero 2006a, 20066; Young and Bon 1999; Tice 1995;
Taussig 1993; Swain 1989; Salvador 1976).
The following sections focus on the interaction of expectations in che tourist encounter as chis cakes place in Parara Puru.1 First I de.scribe how the inhabitants

of the community became involved with tourism and how they put inco use their culcurally embodied knowledge to create an ideal seccing for fulfilling tourist expectations. Then 1examine how the Embeci in Parara Puru are curious to learn more about their guests and how they obtain an understanding of their guests' expectations through the exploratory questions asked by the cow-ists. I pay special attention to some questions that reflect ambivalence in the resulting expectations
- such as questions about the local code of dress or the use of computers - and add an additional level of complexity ro contradictions already experienced by the Embera, independently of tomism (e.g., indigeneity vs. modernity). Finally, I focus on the cultural improvisation encouraged by the growing awareness of the tourist expectations, and resulting cultural adaptations that involve experimentation or spontaneous deviation from established form. As we shaJI see in the ethnography chat follows, the negotiacion of expectations during che tourism exchange in Parara Puru is a dynamic and creative process that has inspired creative adaptations to diverse and contradictory tourist expectations.

An Ideal Setting to Fulfil Tourist Expectations

Surrounded by dense rainforest, and approachable only by canoe, Parara Puru looks at first sight like an isolated community forgotten by time and untouched by modernity. From the point of view of rhe Western visitor the communicy emerges our of the lavish vegetation of the Chagres National Park as a small island of inhabited space within an ocean ofgreen.This inhabited space, however, gives the impression of having emerged 'nacurally' om of the forest. The wooden, thatched roofed houses blend with the overwhelming narural.ness of rhe sunounding environment, and the bird songs mix with the sound of cumbia- Embera music, performed by rhe local inhabitants to welcome incoming groups of visitors. In tune with the music, the relaxed bur joyful disposition of the residents of Parara Puru - who walk slowly to meet the tourists, dressed in traditional attire - resonates with Rousseau-ian representations of a seemingly true and authentic life away from the tribulations of Western civilization.
The notion of authenticity in Western imagination has been associated, under the formative influence of Rousseau, with expectations of sincerity, primordial integrity, paradisiacal innocence and purity (Bendix 1997; Lindholm 2008). 'Simple' or 'native' cultures -such as the indigenous peoples of the contemporary world - have been and are still perceived as sharing those qualities in plenty. The rise of popular ecology in the latter parr of d1e twentieth century increased the appeal of the earlier Rousseau-ian vision, idealizing indigenous communities as being closer to nature or encapsulating the primordial essence of ecological wisdom (Morris 1981; Ellen 1986; Conklin and Gral1am 1995; Milton 1996: 109-14; West and Carrier 2004). In \'v'estern discourse, romanticized images of life in the tropics often combine wirh the critique of modernity, the message of

environmentalists, and old colonial narratives of voyages of discovery. An idealized perception of tropical Panama in particular, as Frenkel (1996) explains, has developed since the lace nineteenth century, fuelling North American imagination wich Edenic images of the Panamanian rainforest.2
Drawing elements from idyllic representations of life in the tropics, or from the environment-friendly depictions of indigenous communities in popular ecology, the tourist agencies that organize day-excursions to the Ember:i communities in Chagres advertise the beauty of the local environment along with the excitement of meeting one of Panama's indigenous 'tribes'. In rourism advertisements, the Embera are represented as people with knowledge of the rainforest, who live- and have always lived- in harmony with it. And indeed, the Embed. are people who possess a great deal of knowledge about the rainforest, the resulr of a long history ofliving in ecosystems similar ro that of Chagres National Park. Although their cultural adaptations, like those of all human groups, involve a certain degree of control over rhe natural environment, their lifesryle and material culture easily firs within the conceptual framework of the rourisrs' expectations. Independently of their engagement with tourism, the Embera. in Chagres are. undeniably, dwellers of tl1e rainforest, and in tl1is respect, are sincere when they present themselves to the tourists in those terms.
The inhabitants of Parara Putu do not have to go our of their way co present the tourists with an experience of ao indigenous culture in the rainforest. Their village is a real inhabited indigenous community, the home of approximately twenty Ember.a families. The houses - all buil.c on stilts, according co Ember:i custom - and the surrounding environment bear the mark of continuous habitation, as new structures and pathways emerge organically to meet the requirements of the local inhabitants. Old dwellings are continuously repaired or replaced by new ones, while electric appliances are gradually incorporated into the community's family houses alongside the more traditional fire hearths. In the spaces around their houses, the

residems of the community have planted trees and flowers with recognizable cultural significance or use, which mark the domestication- rhe Emberization - of rhe local environment (cf. Herlihy 1986; Kane 2004).
Parara Puru is a new Embera community, but all Embera communities are relatively new. Until forty or fifty years ago the Embera favoured a dispersed pattern of settlement, according to which dusters of Embed families, often related by kinship, built their houses alongside the rivers that served, and are still used, as communication arteries through the rainforest. To seaKh for better opportunities, and avoid external threats or internal quarrels, the Embera often disassembled the wooden components of d1eir houses co rebuild chem in new and more favourable locations. Following chis general snategy of dispersion and migration (Williams 2005), the Embera expanded from the region of Choco in Lowland Colombia to the province of Darien in Eastern Panama where they established a strong presence alongside ocher groups such as the Kuna and the

Afrodarienitas (see Kane 2004). In the last sixty years, a smaller number of Embeci families migrated further westward inro the areas surrounding che river Bayano and - closer to the Canal - the river Chagres.
In Chagres, the Embera originally followed their traditional preference for dispersed setdemenr. The foundation of spatially concenuated communities was part of a much wider process which began in Darien in the 1950s and was encouraged by the government in the 1970s and 1980s (see Kane 2004; Hedihy 1986, 2003; Velasquez Runk 2009). Mose of rhe new concentrated communities were formed around newly built primary schools that rhe government established in the newly founded communities. In Chagres, the Ember:i cook under consideration the idea of setting up concentrated communities after the establishment of a National Park in 1985. The regulations of the Chagres Park prohibited hunting and systematic cultivation, bur the proximiry of Chagres to rhe Canal and Panama Ciry made possible the growth of tourism acciviries. Panamanian NGOs, supported by the Ministry ofTourism, assisted the Embera with developing the necessary infrasrrucrure to receive tourists, while a number of courist agencies, also based in the City, underrook the cask of advertising and organizing day trips to d1e Embera communities in Chagres.
The success of the tourism-expedmem was immediate and profitable to both the Embera and the tourist agents. Parara Puru, one of the three Embera communities built on the banks of the river Chagres, was founded nine years ago by an initial core-group of Embera who were born in the vicinity and wanted to work full-time in tourism.They established a small hut vibrant and economically successful community, which, despite its orientation towards tourism, should not be viewed as a tourist enclave: the community's spaces and their aesthetics arc not completely 'regulated, commodified and privatised' (Edensor 1998: 47); d1ere is an absence of high-end tourist facilities, while the majority of houses within che communiry are the permanent residences of che local families and subject to unregulated readjustmenrs.The focal points of the tourism activicy are two large communal houses, where the greater part of the cultural presentations cake place, although the tourists are free to walk around the communicy but without entering individual family homes. Tourist groups range from as large as ninety to a hundred visitors, to as small as two or three independent travellers.
The great majority of tourists rhac visit Parara Puru come from inclusive resorts or cruise-ships passing through the Canal area.. They reach Chagres by bus, and are accompanied by guides who gently supervise chem for me duration of me trip. In Lake Alajuela, which is fed by the river Chagres, they board motorized canoes navigated by Embera men in traditional attire. This is their first glimpse of the Embeci. Before entering the community, the canoe navigators take chose groups chat have more time at tl1eir disposal to d1e nearby waterfalls where some tourists have an opportunity co swim and walk in the rainforest. Afcer chis sensually overwhelming experience, the tourists reach Parara Puru, and are welcomed by its inhabitants at the disembarkation point. Following a small break ro cake

photographs - the Embera of Parara Puru do not shy away from the camera - the t.ourists are accompanied to communal houses where they admire or buy Embera artefacts (at a good price, in comparison to the markets in the City) and are offered a meal of fish and fried plantains served inside a folded palm leaf.
The standard presentation to rourists in Parara Puru also includes a speech by one of the leaders of the community that provides basic information about the community, the traditional methods of consrructing artefacts, and the amount of labour invested in this process. This is followed by a music and dance performance, the most visually compelling part of the cultural presentation. First the women of Parara Puru dance a couple of traditional animal-dances - imitating che movements of difierenc natural species each rime - and chen, men and women form pairs and dance cumbia-Embera and rumba-Embera,3 inviting the couriscs co join in the dance. The dance performance culminates in a spontaneous 'party', as tourist adults and children from diverse cultural backgrounds are united for a short time by the cheerful sound of rumba-Embera.

Before the beginni.ng of the dance, the tourists have the opportunity to ask the Embed. questions which the guides translate. Through chose questions the Ember:i gradually accumulate knowledge about the expectations of their audience. As I will describe in the following sections, the residents of Parara Puru arc still learning how to decode and accommodate the complexity of those expectations. This process of decoding is for most of them a long-term undercalcing. ln the short term, however, and during d1e durntion of the tourists' visit, they remain prepared co answer questions or provide assistance. Some courists, for example, might request a guided walk around me communicy, or in the forest, or ask for some informal instruction in Embera indigenous knowledge. The Embera of Parara Puru will fulfil most requests of that cype, and remain attentive to me courists' needs until they see iliem off at me embarkation point in the early afrernoon. Most comists depart from Parara Puru worn om from the tropical heat, but exhilarated from the experience.

Investigating Each Other's Expectations

The inhabitants of Parara Puru became involved with the tourism economy approximately twelve ye-.irs ago, in d1e period immediately preceding me foundation of rneir commw1icy in its currenr composition and location. Alrhough rney are comparatively new co courism, they have already accumulared considerable experience, and appear to conrrol che tourism encounter wid1 confidence. The interaction wim newgroups of courists, however, remains an open-ended process and often involves small, unexpected challenges. There are alv.-ays new questions the courists askin a sincere desire to learn about theEmbera, or sometimes in a deliberate attempt to uncover alleged inauthentic dimensions of their indigenous life. In this

section 1 will give attencion co someof rhese questions in an arrempt co highlighr an imporranr stage in rhe negotiacion of expectarions during rhe tourisr encowuer.
First, I should clarify rhar rhe Embera in Parara Puru, like in most other Embera com.munities, do not speak languages other than Spanish and Embera. Their communication with the overwhelming majority of tourists who do not speak Spanish is made easier by the involvement of the rourist guides, who are empl.oyees of rhe agencies chat bring the tourists to Chagres. The guides try to facilitate, when possible, the interaction between the Embera and their guests, and translate into the touriscs' language (English, French and, more rarely, Italian) the speeches delivered by one of the leaders of the community. 'The speech' (referred to by the Embera as explicacion or simply char/a) is a standard part of rhe cultural package offered to the tourists: it is delivered in Spanish, includes an explanation of che various methods of Embera artefact manufacture, and a short presenrarion on rhe hisrory of the communiry. Ir is always followed by a question- and-answer session, during which members of the audience ask rhe Embera speaker for further clarificationswid1 rhe inrerpretative help of their tourisr guides who often add - during translation - descriptive information or short comments mat reveal rheir opinions.
I should stress ar d1is point chat alrhough the visiting tourists readiJy assume the role of the audience, observing for rhe mosr pan their hosts, the Embed of Parara Puru have simi.lar opportunities to observe their guests t00. Through daily interacrion, the Embera recognize the ethnic categories of tourists that visit their community and some of their re. pective characteristics. TourisL from different nationalities behave differendy, my respondents explain. Some, for example the North Americans, are likely ro buy many arrefaccs; others, such as the French, fewer; and some, the Germans are a case in point, purchase almosc none. German rouriscs, I was cold (and rhis was verified by my own observacions) enjoy walking in d1e back regions of rhecommuniry, sometimes with their guides, but very ofcen unsupervised - and have a cendency co break away from meir group or 'get lose'! The Italian men, a couple of teenage Embera girls explained, enjoy posing for photos with Embera women, even though the women themselves sometimes find chis attention uncomfortable.
The comments made by the Embera abouc different ethnic groups of tourists represent a significant break away from the old Embera practice of avoiding contact with the oucside world, a Strategy that protected the integrity of the Embed culture buc resulted in limited knowledge of the wider world. The introduction of tourism has facilitated the growth of a global awareness among the Embcra (Thcodossopoulos 2010), and has instigated a curiosity about the crhnic background of the tourists and their respective countries. Very ofcen, while waiting for rhe arrival of particular courist groups, or sometimes just after d1eir departure, young and old Embera men and women would approach me with quescions abour councries such as England, France or Jraly (from which chey receive regular visicors). They are often interested in general information, such as demography,

climate and language, or ask, in some cases, more paniculaJ questions, such as whether there are any indigenous people like themselves in those countries.
Tourists from Latin American countries can interact directly with the Ember:\ in Spanish, and

ask questions, not only of the leaders who are delivering the speech, but also of any ocher member of the community. Some residents of Parara Puru, mostly men, buc also a few women, are very comfortable with chis type of interaction, while ochers are slightly, but always politely, reserved. Non- indigenous Panamanian visitors represent a small but significant category of Spanish-speaking tourists ro whom the Ember:\ devote special care and attention. Mose Ember:\ have been subjected to systematic stereotyping in the past due co their non-mainstream - and seen as 'nor-fully-modernized' - identity. It is not surprising, then, chat they are now very happy to receive some positive attention and recognition by their fellow-narionals who have scarred visiting the community as tourists. Apart from individual families of Panamanian rourists, Parara Puru regularly receives visits from Panamanian higher education insricutions, which attempt ro culrivate among cheir scudencs a posirive acticude towards rbe indigenous Cltltures of 'their' country.
The residents of Parara Puru rake all questions seriously and arrempr ro give the best answer possible, no inaner rhe narionaliry or si,.e of rhe visiting group. The leaders of the community who deliver 'the speech' receive most of rhe questions, and are able to answer comperendy and diplomatically due to their skills they have developed from daily practice. Some questions asked by the tourists come from a curiosity co learn about particular dimensions of Ember:\ culrure, while some ochers reAecr an implicit desire co question rhe authencicity of Parara Puru as a truly indigenou.s community. The result of this type of question-and-answer interaction is a two-way negotiation of expectations char provides both parties - the tourists and the Embera - with new information about each ocher's perspectives. In the following sections I will offer some detailed examples.

Tourist Questions and Expectations

le rook me some time during my fieldwork co realize chat rhe appaJencly simple questions the tourists ask - questions char some of my Ember:\ respondents and I creaced as way roo obvious - reflected complex rourist experiences and subjectivities. A good example is a question I have hea(d many times in different periods of my fieldwork: many tourists ask, in a shore and straightforward manner, if the Embera do, in real life, live in Parara Puru. The same question is sometimes phrased in a rather clumsy manner, such as 'do you live here in the forest all the time>' From the pointof view of che Embera, Parara Puru is, without any doubt, nor part of the forest (which surrounds che community) bur a very much inhabited, domesricace<l space. After the couriscs' departure, wme of my

respondencs have commenced with apprehension on the possibility char some tourists have failed to realize that chey in fact 'live here' (chat is, in the community) and 'nor in the forest'. In che presence of che courisc audience, however, chey politely reply, chat 'yes', indeed, they live here all the time, chat is, 'in the communiryof Parara Puru'.
Behind this straightforward question, however, there ofcen lies a more complicated tourist experience. Some well-travelled tourists have accended culmral presentations by ocher ethnic groups that rake place in locations oucside the indigenous community, such as sites of historic significance (see Bunten, this volume) or settings especially prepared for tourist performances. The well- travelled tourists a.re often aware that indigenous performers can travel co designated locations, ofcen dressed in traditional costume, for the wle purpose of the tourism exchange (see Kircsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2004). This comparative dimension in the critical chinking of some wurists is le$-5 obvious, but can become apparent during subsequent conversations with the tourists themselves. In many cases, the tourists' view represents a more widespread wariness towards the commoditized nature of pre-arranged cultural presentations. This wariness is sometimes directly expressed wich questions focusing on che Embera accire. 'Do you wear these cloches all day?' or 'Are you dressed like chis every day?' rhe tourists often ask. Some courisc guides welcome chis type of probing question and, before translating into Spanish, chey make small remarks like 'I am interested co know the answer co this question as well', or 'leeus see how he [rhe Embera leader) will answer this question.'. On these occasions, the guides find an opportunity co implicitly stress their modem subjectivicy- perceived as parallel co that of their clients - by underlining their ability co challenge the full extent of the Embera adherence co tradition. The implication here is that the Embera are not expected co maintain daily their traditional code of dressing in the modern world, according to which the upper part of the body is mostly
uncovered, decorated only by body painting, necklaces and bracelets.
The Ember:i leaders who deliver 'the speech' an wer questions of this type with diplomatic honesty: they explain chat the government does nor allow them co venture outside of their communities in traditional attire. Non-indigenous Panamanians, they add, are also obliged (by law) to wear at least a T-shirt when they appear in public. They also explain chat when che tourists depart, the inhabitants of the community take off their necklaces and bracelers to

carry out
their daily chores in a more comfortable manner. The women, some Embera further clarify, wear their traditional skirts (parumas) all day, and often outside of the commw1iry. All rhese statements are crue: as a matter of principle, the Embera of Parara Puru rarely lie co enhance their self-representation. Yet, chey will diplomatically avoid emphasizing d1e fucc char men, women and children do wear T-shirts both wid1in and outside the community, while men also wear shorts.
As I will further explain in the followving section, the issue of'whac clothes the Embera should wear' is a serious topic for debate even within the Embera

communiry. The questions of the tourists, however, reAecr their percept.ion of the Embera as inhabiting an ambiguous position at rhe crossroads of tradition and modernicy. There are additional rypes of questions che tourists ask that indirectly address chis ambiguous position, such as for example questions about health and education. Most tourists are fascinated to hear about Ember:i shamans (jaibanas), their knowledge of the medicinal properties of plants and, more importantly, the degree to which contemporary Embed rely on their care and advice. With respect ro the last issue, chey ask relevant questions and receive honest and direct answers. Some Embera, the tourists are cold, still rely on cradirional medicine - sometimes, but noc ac all rimes; and yec, co solve more serious medical problems, chey take convemional medicines and, if this is absolmely necessary, visic a medical centre or a hospital omside the commtmiry.
Questions about the education of the Embera, as these are arriculaced by visiting tourists, often conceal the inadvertent recommendation char Embera children living in the rainforest should nor be deprived of educational opponunities. In chis respect, and as I will further underline in che following section, the tourists' admiration of premodern cultural lifestyles gives way in the face of their modern values about education. The Embera of Parara Puru share very similar pro-educational values, and answer these types of question without any ambivalence or hesitation, proudly stating chat they have a primary school in the communiry and that they cherish the education of their children. An issue rhac is nor always made directly obvious co rhe rouriscs, bur rhac concerns the Embed, is rhar the children of the latter receive education only in Spanish, as very few teachers are qualified co reach the Embera language and there are currently only a few appropriate rexcbooks char reach Embera.4
Other rypes of exploracory questions asked by the courisrs in Parara Puru are, for the most part, less concroversial, reflecting the traveller's ethnographic curiosity. For example, tourists frequendy ask: '.Are you monogamous?' (Usual reply: 'yes'); 'Where do you find panners co marrt' (Usual reply: 'in neighbouring Embera communities, or in Darien, where many Embera live'); 'At what age do young people marry?' (Usual reply: 'girls at 16, boys a bit older, unless they want tO continue their education'); 'How do young people have fun?' (Usual reply: sometimes in social gatherings in neighbouring Embcra and non- Emera communities, sometimes locally). When some of rhe same questions are asked by non-indigenous Panamanians, such as Panamanian students on an educational crip, rhe Embera of Parara Puru mighc provide additional derails co their answers, making more apparenr co their interlocucors chat they coo live in the san1e nation and are nor coo different from them after all. For example, it is more openly admicred in these cases that many residents of Parara Puru go for entertainment to neighbouring non-Embera communities, rhac apart from their own Embera music they Like to listen and dance co popular Panamanian musical genres (such as tipico); and char when they go co r.he hospital chey have co show, like all Panamanian citizens, their national identity card.

Indigeneity with or without Modernity

As we have already seen, several of che questions chat che tourists ask in Parara Puru indicare the ambivalence in che minds of the tourists about the position of the Embera in the imersection of tradition and modernity. This ambivalence is noticeable in the negotiation of the expectations during the tourism encounter, and becomes more apparent in discussions about certain topics such as the issue of the Ember.I traditional attire, and the possibility of inuoducing computers ro rhe community. Boch topics concern the Embera independently of their interaction with tourists; but the tourists' expectations, as these are gradually communicated during che tourism exchange, add an extra level of complexity ro such local concerns.
The issue of the Ember.I attire-or, the issue of clothe. or clothing (vestidos) - represents a broader topic ofdebate in the Embed. world.Therearc many Embed. women who feel uncomfortable wich che old tradition of having their upper body exposed, covered solely by necl<laces and body paint. This is, co a great extent, a response co accusations by non-Embed. Panamanians who associate che lack of cloches with inferior morals or values. Many Embera women in comparatively inaccessible communities in Darien systematically cover their upper bodies with bras, T-shirts, or both, while they still prefer to cover their lower body wich the traditional Embera skirts (parumas). In Parara Puru however, where Embera tradition is presented to groups of outsiders

and is more confidently and systematically celebrated, most Embera women still feel comparatively comfortable with the traditional Embera attire.
However, a positive evaluation for the traditional Embera code of dress is nor only found in those communities that have developed tourism. Even in inaccessible Ember.I communities, which do not receive tourists, there arc some men and women who feel comfortable with fewer clothes and are not embarrassed by the coplcss-ness of the traditional attire. On the whole, the ambivalence of the Embera abour che question of the Embera. code of dress cues across che tourism or lack-of-tourism divide, while supporters of all possible positions can be found among young and old. The introduction of tourism has added furcher complexity to the issue chat often results in a three-way contradiction: (a) che social expectation co follow the values of the Panamanian nation and modernity, which clashes not only with (b) traditional practices, but also with (c) the expectation of the tourist audience that the Ember.I should hold fast to traditiona.lpractices such as their code of dress.
This triple contradiccion becomes more evidenr as the Embed who engage with tourism gradually become, first, more confident about the value of their traditional practices, which are admired by Western visitors and, second, aware chat the latter are pleased to sec them in traditional attire, and expect from them adherence to this code of dress more generally, and not only in the context of cultural presentations. A Western preference for the traditional-mm-exotic code

of dress informs similar dilemmas and contradictions faced by other indigenous groups in Latin America (see Conklin 1997; Gow 2007; Ewart 2007; Sancos- Granero 2009). Among the tourists in particular, it is easy co distinguish those who pass judgement on the Embera based on their suspicion that they dress inauthencically (appearing in traditional dress only for che duration of the cultural presentations), and those who arc willing to accept the Embcra as people who can wear modern clothes without compromising their indigenous identity.
On one particular occasion, for example, a small group of Japanese visitors were thrilled co discover a 'made in Japan' label on che bottom edge of a pttruma skirc. Afrer hearing d1e explanatory comments made by their guide, they realized rhar, nowadays, rhis represenrarively Embera type of clothing is manufactured in Asia specifically for the Embera and according to Embera specifications.5 The Japanese tourists were even more thrilled co realise that despite its international record of manufacture, a pamma is quincessenrially an Embera garment worn by Embed women within and outside their communiries with the implicit intention of underlining their ethnic origin. The Japanese couriscs' ability to accept che Embed as inhabitanrs of a globalized world, without challenging their indigeneicy, is representative of a significant number of tourists. Ochers maintain less Aexible expectations and, like the examples I offered in the previous section, they question the degree to whicil the Embera wear traditional clothes in their daily lives.
Similar contradictions emerge with respect co the introduction of computers in rhe Embera community. When considering the use of computers, as wirh education more generally, several rouristsare ready co depart from their exocicized expectation of indigenous people living without modern technology, in harmony wich nature. More specifically, che image of young children learning how co use compmers is associaced with the ideal of education for all which appeals to most Western tourists. The idea of adulc indigenous people using computers, however, represents an anomaly for some visitors co Parara Puru, who see che inhabited spaces of the community and i.ts thatched-roof dwellings as an extension of the forest. The tourists would have been surprised co know thatseveral inhabitancs of Parara Puru are interested in computers and some are learning how co use them. In 2008 I met a Peace Corps volunteer, Deborah Rockoff, who <levore<l a considerable amount of time and effort to tcacl1ing children and adults in Parara Puru basic computer skills. She used her own laptop for this purpose, while investigating the possibility of acquiring additional computers for the community's school and the community's main office. Some of the adulr members of the community had already benefited from her help, learning how co keep die community's accounts in Microsoft Excel. The Embera who parricipaced in chis e.xperimenc were enchusiastic and asked me additional questions about the Internee and the possibility of advertising the community through the Internet. They remained, however, somehow unsure about che impact that computer use might have on the profile of rhe community with respect co their perceived 'authenticitiy'.Theic initial hesitation about what the couriscs' opinion might be,

allowed me to appreciate the degree co which a certain type of tourist expectation - namely the desire co meet an authemic indigenous communiry disconnected from the rest of the world - has already added a complex cum co che emerging strategies of Embera cultural represencation. In the section chac follows, I will
describe how problems of this type are often solved with improvisation and spontaneiry, as the community of Parara Puru adapts co the challenges posed by the tourism economy.

Anticipation and.Improvisation as a Response to Tourist Expectations

In a short period of approximately twelve years, the residents of Parara Puru have entered the economy of tourism dynamically. At first they learned how to carry out successful cultural performances. Then, through frequent practice, they started accwnulating additional experience, gaining knowledge as co how co guide their guests, and inviting chem co see the world from their point of view. They are now gradually moving away from the initial scage of hesitant experimencacion with presenting facets of an Amerindian culture co an audience of \Xlescern tourists, and are slowly entering a more confident second stage of articulating d1e characteristics of cheir own culcural tradition co me non-Embeci world. This process of cransformacion does not merely enhance che representation of the Embera culcure, bur also encourages and facilitates its enrichment with new culrnral elements.

As my respondents in Parara Puru explained co me, tourism has provided d1em with an opporttmity cospend more time practising their culture. They nowdevote more time to manufacturing Embera artefacts, in much greater numbers, and in a greater variety of motifs and variations. They dance their traditional dances daily (as opposed to only on special occasions), and have more opportw1ities co perfect their talent as dancers or musicians in a much wider repertoire of dance and musical theme variations. They have also become skilled at better articulating the panicularicciesof their culture, such as describingor explaining artefacts, buildings, elements of the physical and man-made environment, techniques of manufacture, cultural traditions and performances. Through practice and improvisation mcy conuibute new elements to the wealth of their culture, opening new possibilities for being Ember-a in the contemporary world.

'lo a significant extent this phase of cultural creativity is stimulated by the negotiation of expectations in me interaction with tourists. Day after day, d1e Embera of Parara Puru learn how co anticipate some of the most usual questions the tourists ask, and improve their skill in giving precise, and when necessary, diplomatic answers. Foreign tourists and Panamanian non-indigenous visitors have slightly different expectations, and are likely co admire or criticize different aspects of the indigenous life. The Embera hosts pay very careful attention co

these subtle differentiations in the respective expectations of their guests, and adapt their narratives accordingly, stressing slightly different dimensions of their daily lives. For example, they ruighc, co some small excent, underplay cheir differences wich their Panamanian visitors in an attempt co demonstrate chat they coo are citizens of the same modern nation, or they might accentuate their culcural distinctiveness in fronr of North American audiences. Ac the same cime, however, they become aware that the expectations of the non-Embera world are diverse and complex, and chac chis complexity can open up a whole new range of possibilities for the representation of the Embera culture. For example, it is already apparent co most Embera in Parara Puru chat while, unril cwenry years ago, the non-indigenous Panamanian majority maintained a stereotyping attitude coward the Embed. indigenous identity, the tourists from the nations of the economically developed world appreciate - and some even approach with awe and admiration - rhe Embera indigenous rradicions. In a similar manner, an increasing number of che Panamanian middle class are imerested in learning more abour Embera culcure, and willing co abandon or partly reconsider cheir previous negative stereotypes.

In Parara Puru, the emerging awareness of these changing expeccacions has inspired a renewed i11cerest in the issue of the authenticity of indigenous culmre. This often cakes the form of collective incrospeccion, a concern with the history of the .Embera tradition and che 'cruchfulness' of its representation. Now that a wider non-Embera audience is increasingly paying attention co the Embed, the Embera feel a gwwing responsibility to pay more attention co che details of their own culture.They desire co become more informed and more articulate guides of the Embera world, able co describe a wider variety of cultural particularities chat might interest a larger variety of tourists, including chose who are more knowledgeable and inquisitive.

During six sequential period of fieldwork in Parara Puru - in 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 - l had rhc opportunity ro observe these nuanced changes in perspective. Year after year, new individuals - men and women - seep forward and cake a progressively more active role in guiding the visitors, narrating the history of the community, or explaining che making of artefacts, the paniculars of rhe dress code, and specific details of che Embera way of life. With the increase in the munber ofvoices char contribute to the guiding of che visitors, rhe narrative about Embera culture becomes enriched with new derails and new perspectives. Each individual, old or young, male or female, incroduces life experiences char reflect slightly different skills, and slightly different subjecrivicies. In chis respect, the project of educating che tourists inco rhe basics of Embera culture gradually accommodares a number of paraUel journeys of exploration into che deeper aspects Embera culture undertaken by the Embed. themselves.

Nevertheless, the collective pool of knowledge about Embera culcure in Parara Puru is not sufficient co answer all pocential questions the rouriscs might ask. For chis reason, the majority of che inhabitants of the community, like amateur

anduopologists, have their ears open for additional pieces of information chat could be gathered during conversations with Embera from other communities. In this respect, knowledge about culnaral issues can make a difference in negotiating tourist expectations (see also,Tucker, Bunten, in this volume). In Parara Puru new information about the cultural particularitiesofEmbera life is shared throughout the community at speed, between family members, and from one family to another, especially when the new information in question can add a new element to the daily presentations for the rourists. On one occasion, for example, I was fortunate to observe a small change in the dailydance presentations that occurred within less than a week! Rumba-Ember.i had typically been danced until then in pairs, with the dancers positioned side-by-side, moving in a circular procession, in a manner choreographicallysimilar to cumbia-Ember.i.6Then one day in April 2008, the inhabitants of Parara Puru starred dancing the nunba-Embera in a face- to-face position, again in a circular pattern, bur in a freestyle manner, not in procession as before.

The change described above was evidently small and involved the choreographic arrangement of the bodies of the dancing couples, while the music of the dance remained the same. However, since I was concerned at the time of fieldwork with che details of the Embera dance tradition, I was immediately struck by the changes. I started asking my respondents in the community and I was given, in most cases, more or less the same answer: 'This is the correct way to dance rumba-Embed'. Considering the small size of the community, it was easy to identify the individuals who had introduce.J this small change in the style of the dance and their rationale for implementing it. In the Chagres area, the numbers of the Ember.i arc small, and their experience with dancing rumba- Ember:i before the introduction of tourism was limired. Bur it became apparenr during my fieldwork char chis free-style arr-angemenr of the dancing couples was closer co the way the Ember:i dance rumba in Darien, where Ember:i dancing has been more established. Very conveniently, the newstyle of dancing was also easier for the tourists co follow and has facilitated tourist participation.

More importantly, whiJe older dance patterns become features of everyday dance practice, new dance moves are introduced rhrougb rehearsal and improvisation, and the Embera dance tradition, which was declining until the introduction of tourism, is undergoing a revitalization. This is apparent also in the Embera animal-dances, che ocher major rype of Embera dancing, which encourages improvisation as part of imitating the movement and attributes of native animal species. The introduction of tourism has motivated the resident.. of Parara Purn to dance a much greater number of animal dances than ever before, and introduce a wide variety of new dance moves and choreographed patterns imo their exisring repertoire.The degree of improvisation has been accelerated by tourism, inspiring the Ember:i to realize new avenues of artistic expression.

Similar examples of improvisation and experimentation that result in new patterns and designs can be found in the conre t of the Ember:i arr of basket and

mask construction. The wider Embera society in Panama - nor merely the communities chat encercain tourists - are involved in che production of cultural artefacts that eventua.lly find their way into the tourist market (Velasquez Runk 200 l). With the increase in material culture production, new designs emerge our of older patterns, while new colours are introduced usingold and well-established dyeing techniques (cf. Callaghan 2002). As the art of Embcra basketry continues co evolve, new natural dyeing mediums are introduced to produce more colours and accommodate a greater variecy of designs.7 My respondents in Parara Puru welcome chis creative freedom and the new possibilities char it encourages, and state char they prefer work invested in constructing cultural arcefacrs to labouring for culrivation-relared undertakings.

As we have already seen, rhe desire co anticipate the expectations of tourists has inspired creaciviry and cultural improvisation among the Embera who are involved with tourism. In the context of work invesced in cultural performances for tourists, the established authenticity of older practices merges with the spontaneous discovery of new mocifs. The reorganization of new and old elements emerges organically in daily life as the Embera adapt to new circumstances, but does nor contradict older practices - that is, what the Ember:i themselves see as'Ember:i traditions'. The latter remain, as l have argued elsewhere, true to the spirit of Embera social organization and process (Theodossopoulos 2010). In this respect, however scereocypical or unrepresentative the expectations of some tourists might be, rhey have stimulated, co a smaller or larger extent, rhe production of creative solutions co a newset of challenges.

Conclusion

While at the beginning of their engagement with tourism the residents of Parara Puru simply

relied on their readily available knowledge abouc their culture (that is, what most Embera more or less know), in a relacively shore period of time, and through frequent practice in working with rouriscs, they scarred refining their skills at presenting Embed culture. During their first seeps a. entertainers of tourists they attempted to provide their guests with an indigenous experience, a spectacle (see Urry 1990). W'ith the passage of time, however, the Embed of Parara Puru identified some dimensions of their culture that the tourists were likely to appreciate more, collected additional information about these cultural dimensions, and improved rheir skill in practising them. Having learnt how co anticipate some of the courists' expectations, and equipped with d1is knowledge, rhey starred guiding d1e tourists inco and around rheir culmre, instead of merely participating in a spectacle. As with other Amerindian ethnic groups, they now exercise a certain degree of control over their self-presentation (c(Bunten 2008: 392; chis volume).

Presendy, che Embera who live in communicies chac regularly receive couriscs spend more rime rhan ever before discussing, being concerned wirh, and praccising che performarive and aniscic aspects of their culture. Month afrer month, year after year, they become more experienced as anisrs, dancers, storytellers and guides to che Embera. cradicion. Through daily practice, chey share more oppornrniries to spontaneously improvise, introduce new patterns or designs to established motifs, incorporate new materials into traditional techniques, and include additional information into customary sets of knowledge and narratives. Small fragments of partly forgotten information about Embera history and tradition are collected and integrated into new narratives, or used co authenticate contemporary practices. However, new adaptations and improvisations taking place in Parara Puru are not challenging the conventions of Ember-a culture, bur they evolve 'from within the local cultural matrix' (Bruner 2005: 5). As such culcural improvisation is 'intrinsic ro the very processes of social and culcural life' (Ingold and Hallam 2007: 19).
So, rhe Embera improvise and experimenr as rhey rry to meer the expecrarions of their visirors. In this process, they feel committed to respecting 'the ways of their parents and grandfathers' through a conscious acrempt to reproduce dances, artefacts, and body decoration in accordance with established cultural patterns. Yer, through the spontaneous combination of new forms with old structures - which inevitably occur in everyday practice - they restructure their cultural representations.This 'restructuring' often involves, as Stewart has suggested in his discu. sion of creolizacion and mixture, 'an internal reorganization of elements' (2007: 18).This is why I argue chat a moresystematic appreciation of the internal reorganization of culrural expressions can help us circumvent the obstacles of the binary distinction berween authenticity and inauthenticity, an opposition chat implies a staricand limiting understanding of culture as a fixed and self-contained enrity. In everyday life rhere is no single genuine Embera culture; culture, as Brw1er (1993, 1994, 2005) argues, always evolves and adapts ro new challenges, just one of which is indigenous tourism.
Bm while the dialogue with the rourists' expectations is inspiring creativity, it also brings co the surface a few contradictions inherent in the tourists' imagination of contemporary indigenous people. The tourist expectations oscillate bet,veen a yearning to preserve an uncontaminated version ofindigeneicy
- an expectation of unshakeable cultural integrity and purity (Ramos l 998: 70) based on 'an ontological and essentialist vision of exotic cultures' Salazar (2010: xviii) - and an implicit desire to introduce Western civilizational benefits into the indigenous experience, such as education in schools or medical care in hospitals. These contradictory expectations match comparable tensions experienced by the Embera in che non-courism-relared dimensions of cheir lives - such as the
commitment to hold fast ro a distinctive indigenous rradicion and the responsibility of participating in the life of a modern narion. In this respect, che efforcs of the Embera ro understand and anticipate the expectations of tourists

closely relate to, and often complicate, similar concerns they tackle - independently of tourism - as citizens of their nation and inhabitants of a changing world.
At che same cime, however, the expectations of the world cowards che Embera are also changing. The residents of Parara Puru are able co detect these changes through their negotiation of tourist expectations in the tourism encounter. Up until twenty years ago, the Embera were discriminated against by their nation's non-indigenous majority on the grounds of their cultural distinctiveness (which was stereotyped as primitiveness). Now, foreigners from the most powerful and prosperous nations of the world approach Panama's indigenous communities with respect and care. Even Panamanian visitors arc willing to appreciate Embcni culture in positive terms, adopting their government's official perception of cLdtural diversity as an asset to the nation (more generally) or rhe developmem of tourism (more particularly) (cf. Guerron-Momero 2006a; Pereiro Perez 2010). ln d1is regard, the Embed. have come a long way from their old strategy of avoiding comacr wirh rhe outside world to rheir current accelerated conract with the global

communicy, which has resulted in increased recognition and respect from oucsiders. The Embera residents of Parara Puru are continually polishing their skill in deciphering and anticipating conrradictory tourist expectations. The tourists undeniably add an additional level of ambiguicy to the hazy interface of tradition with modernity. My Embera respondents, however, are keen to fuce and resolve the problems arising from chis ambiguity and, without any doubt, they declare their desire co cake advantage of the courisc economy.They now wish co reach our to the world and enhance the representation and visibility of cheir culture (Theodossopoulos 2009; Scrathern and Stewart 2009), co derive some benefit from the globalizing economy (Loker 1999), and co renegotiate - as ocher Panamanian ethnic groups have done (cf. Howe 1998, 2009; Guerr6n-Montcro 2006a, 2006b; Tice 1995; Young and Borr 1999) - their relationship with the wider national and incernacional communicy. In Parara Puru, the tourists' expeaacions, despite their contradictory nature, have simultaneously inspired both culcucal improvisation and the revitalization of older indigenous practices, encouraging the Embeci co adapt - as they have done in rhe pasc (c£ Kane 2004; Williams 2005) - co new challenges and opporcunities. The dialogue with the international community, as this is realized through the negoriacion of expectations in the tourist encounter, has facilitated chis process, repeatedly reminding the Embera that the omside world is curious abom their urLique culcure.

Notes

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I. Where I undertook anthropological fieldwork in August and Scpccmber 2005, February, March and April 2007, March and April 2008, July and August 2009, February, March, April and May 20 IO and January, February, March and April 20 I I. The first drafr of chis chapter was wrinen in 2009, butduring revision bcnc/,red from larer fieldwork.

2. An i<lc::alizc<l image:d: iat coexisted inan ambivalent rdationship with contrasting perecptions of physical danger and moral degradation lurking in the tropical jungle (Frenkel 1996).

3. For a derailed description of these dances. and their importance for Embera culcural represenradon> seeTheodos.'lopou)o. n.d.

4. The Panamanian Ministry of Education has recently produced a couple of textbooks of the Embcr3 language for primary education, a project that is (at the time of writing) at an experirnenral stage.

5. The textiles used for the Ember:i parwnnsare different from chose used by Kw,a women for rheir rradirional cosrumes, alrhough boch are ofren - and especially nowadays- manufucrured in Asia. The origin of borh the Kuna and Ember:\ rradicional women's outfit 'cannot be cccdiced ro any single outside source'; bolh com.tin 'elements that can be traced back seve,·al hundred ye-.irs, and others that have developed as ,he resulr of contact' and as adaptations ,o the arriv-.tls o(new materials (Salvador I976: I69).

6. For a detailed dcscciption of rumba- and cumbia-Embcr:i, and rhe significance of improvisation in Embcra dandng, seeThcodossopoulos n.d.

7. Forcomµar-Jtive examples of indigenous ans, new designs and older patterns, see Gmburn 1976, Smith I989; and among rhc Kuna (the neighbours of rhc Embed) see Tree 1995, Salvador 1976.

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